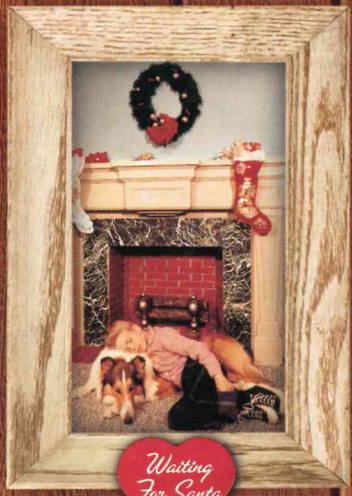
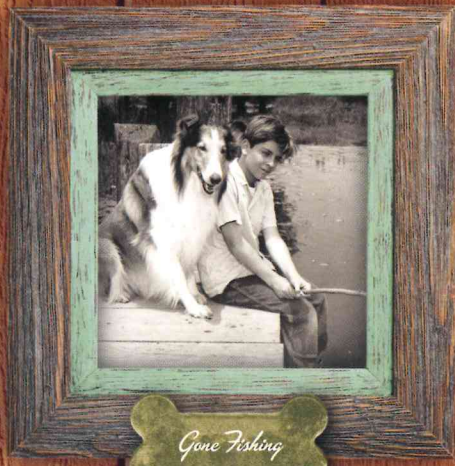
LASSIE®

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF LOVE™



Waiting For Santa



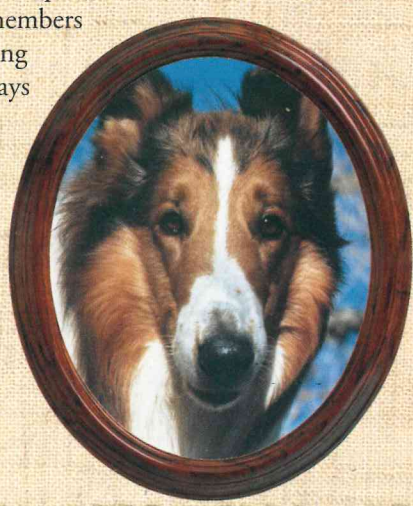
Gone Fishing



LASSIE®

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF LOVE™

Movies made Lassie a star. TV made her a legend. Over the course of nineteen seasons, an incredible 588 episodes, Lassie transformed from a beloved movie star to the most famous animal of all time. With the new medium of television allowing Lassie to come into millions of living rooms, viewers were able to feel closer to her than they ever had before. In turn, as Lassie entered homes around the world, she forever changed the way people saw their pets. In no small part because of Lassie's incredible performances on this series, animals are now considered members of the family, sharing everything from meals to chores to holidays in millions of homes. These humble tales of loyalty and courage drew viewers closer to the pets they owned and Lassie became a symbol of unconditional love and acceptance. Not bad for an undersized collie that had been abandoned by her original owner.



Lassie entered a television world dominated by variety shows and situation comedies and changed TV forever.

To celebrate Lassie's 50th anniversary, the episodes in this set have been compiled to represent a small portion of the legacy that has made Lassie the most loved animal in the world. Though some of these teleplays are now decades old, they remain as fresh as the night they aired. Thanks to Lassie's uncanny performances, and stories that not only entertain, but also inspire, this collection will prove to be as timeless as the classics it contains.



On a late summer Sunday night in 1954, a collie named Lassie entered a television world dominated by variety shows and situation comedies



and changed TV forever. Over the next 350 dog years, Lassie would go on to pioneer and define family drama and outlast nearly every other show on the air.

Yet the story of Lassie did not begin when CBS aired that first episode. In the 1940s, Lassie had achieved fame in a series of MGM films based on Eric Knight's classic novel Lassie Come-Home. After six movies, Rudd Weatherwax, Lassie's owner and trainer, received all rights to the Lassie trademark in exchange for the $40,000 of back pay MGM owed him. Weatherwax took the star of the films, a small collie named Pal that he had taken in after the owner refused to pay his obedience-training bills, and headed out across the country on the fair and rodeo circuit.

Two years later, as the live dates began to wane, television producer Bob Maxwell caught the stage show and convinced Weatherwax that Lassie could find new life as the star of a television series. Rudd agreed to bring Pal back into the studio.

Maxwell quickly produced a pilot to be shopped to the networks. George Cleveland, a veteran character actor who had worked with Lassie in the third MGM film, Courage of Lassie, played Gramps, the male lead. Jan Clayton, a noted Broadway actress, accepted the role of Ellen, the mother. Maxwell then began an intensive search for the most important member of the ensemble—the child.

Rudd and Bob believed it was crucial that the series center on a boy and his dog. After screen testing what seemed like every child actor in L.A., it came down to a difficult choice between Tommy Rettig (River of No Return) and Lee Aaker (Hondo). Maxwell opted to let the show's star choose which boy would play Jeff. Pal chose Rettig. In a strange twist of fate, Aaker later landed the lead roll on Rin Tin Tin.

The pilot would be Pal's last hurrah as Lassie. The fourteen-year-old collie did not disappoint. In glorious black-and-white, Pal created cinematic magic one last time. Featuring a simple but tightly wound plot that coupled Capra-esque innocence with superb acting, "The Inheritance" was head and shoulders above most television shows of the era. Maxwell knew he had a winner.



CBS signed the series to a full-year contract and the Campbell Soup Company bought every national commercial





Lassie ruled her time slot. The show won two Emmys and was honored by everyone from the PTA to the White House.

spot for the entire season. With network and sponsor excited and onboard, Lassie was ready for the American public.

On Sunday, September 12, 1954, millions watched Lassie's small-screen debut. A week later the show returned with Pal's son, Junior, playing the lead. The ratings were even better. Critics agreed: Lassie was the best thing on TV.

For three years, Lassie ruled her time slot. The show won two Emmys® and was honored by everyone from the PTA to the White House. Even so, Bob Maxwell and Rudd Weatherwax were anxious. They figured the Lassie run had to be about over. After all, how many more plots could be written about a boy and a dog? When Texas oil magnate Jack Wrather (who owned The Lone Ranger) offered to buy the Lassie trademark and the



production company, Bob and Rudd quickly made a deal. Maxwell left the set forever, but Weatherwax and Junior agreed to stick around for the duration of the series. Rudd figured that the show would last for a couple more seasons. A few weeks later, when George Cleveland died suddenly, it appeared as if Weatherwax and Lassie might be out of work in months, not years.

With an important member of the cast gone and Tommy Rettig now a teenager, Lassie had to be extensively reworked. But would the public accept a different family and, more importantly, a different boy teaming with Lassie?

In December 1957, Lassie welcomed the Martin family—Jon Provost as Timmy, Cloris Leachman as Ruth, and Jon Shepodd as Paul. It was immediately apparent that Provost worked well. Fans loved Timmy. But Leachman and Sheppod didn't fit. In the fall of 1958, with no announcement or explanation, June Lockhart and Hugh Reilly replaced the adult leads. It was a risky move, but the right one. Once again, the cast chemistry was perfect. For the next six years, Provost, Lockhart, Reilly, and Lassie would be one of the most successful ensembles on television.





As Lassie earned huge ratings and won scores of awards, Wrather put his marketing team to work. By 1960, hundreds of Lassie products had appeared around the world. There were books, lunch boxes, school tablets, board games, stuffed animals, toys, billfolds, viewmaster sets, watches, puzzles, and rings. Several airlines even lobbied to become Lassie's official carrier as she traveled the country promoting education, reading, fire safety, and savings bonds. Yet even as everyone enjoyed the glory days, another challenge lay ahead.

By 1964, Jon Provost, now 14, had grown tired of playing a child. Bonita Granville Wrather, executive producer of the series, felt it might be time to move away from a family setting. An earlier episode that teamed Lassie with a forest ranger had drawn both critical praise and great public response. With that in mind, the Wrathers decided to make their superstar a member of the U.S. Forestry Service. Taking Lassie away from the natural association of a dog and a boy was a long shot, but with Robert Bray, and later Jack De Mave

and Jed Allen, cast as forest rangers, the show didn't miss a beat. Lassie remained one of the most popular series on CBS and Lassie became an unofficial symbol of the Forest Service.

On September 20, 1970, in what was a natural progression, Lassie shared the show with no human leads. In each episode, Lassie helped someone in need before moving on to another adventure. It is a fitting testament to the power of Lassie's connection with viewers. Over the course of twenty years, casts, co-stars, and settings changed while Lassie remained steadfastly and beautifully herself. "The people don't matter," director Jack Hively once said. "All you really need is a camera and the dog."



JEFF'S COLLIE YEARS (1954-1957)

REGULAR CAST:
Tommy Rettig as Jeff Miller
Jan Clayton as Ellen Miller
George Cleveland as Gramps
Donald Keeler as Porky Broadway



THE INHERITANCE: Episode 1
Originally aired September 12, 1954
Directed by Leslie Goodwins
Written by Claire Kennedy

In the pilot episode for the series, the reading of a neighbor's will bequeaths Lassie to Jeff Miller, but it takes a hired hand attempting to steal some hidden money to make Lassie and Jeff a team.

Only in this episode is Lassie played by Pal, the Lassie of the MGM movies. Lassie II, also known as Junior, took over when CBS picked up the series.

At one point in the episode, Jeff takes Lassie through a series of tricks. The hand motions he uses are the same ones that Rudd Weatherwax used with all the Lassies. For the first time, viewers were seeing Weatherwax's actual training methods in action.

LION: Episode 8
Originally aired October 31, 1954
Directed by Sheldon Leonard
Written by Claire Kennedy

When Jeff sees an African lion, everyone thinks his imagination is running wild. But while Gramps and Ellen are away, the lion shows up and terrorizes the boys.

During the filming of this episode, Lassie really did save the day. When the lion got loose, she managed to lead it away from the set.

LASSIE'S PUPS: Episode 10
Originally aired November 14, 1954
Directed by Leonard Freeman
Written by Leonard Freeman and Eric Scott

In this classic, Jeff must make a midnight dash down a rural road to get help for a dying Lassie.



Though one of the best shows of the series, Lassie does nothing but remain still during this episode. The dog's only stunt work is when the male collie appears to nurse newborn pups, accomplished by placing honey on his stomach. Though all the Lassies would eagerly race through fire or plunge into raging rivers, they never enjoyed pretending to nurse.

THE JOURNEY: Episode 51
Originally aired February 26, 1956
Directed by Maurice Geraghty
Written by Thelma Robinson

The Millers discover Lassie is going blind from a rare disease that the local vets cannot treat. Jeff skips school and hitchhikes to Capital City to see an eye surgeon. The boy offers the physician his entire savings, $3.72, to operate on Lassie. "Maybe you can take one of my eyes and give it to her," Jeff pleads.

THE RUNAWAY: Episode 103
Originally aired September 8, 1957
Directed by Philip Ford
Written by Paul David

This episode marks the introduction of Jon Provost as Timmy, a lost child who ends up in the Miller's barn. Unable to care for the boy, Timmy's guardians allow him to spend the summer with the Millers on the farm.

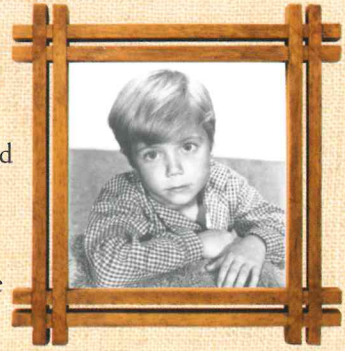
TRANSITION: Episode 115
Originally aired December 1, 1957
Directed by Maurice Geraghty
Written by Clarie Kennedy

Gramps dies as Timmy's summer with the Millers is scheduled to end. Ellen decides to move to the city and a childless couple is found to take care of Timmy. The Martin's not only adopt Timmy, but decide to take over the farm as well. Lassie decides to stay with Timmy and Jeff says a final goodbye to his beloved friend. A real tearjerker.

THE TIMMY YEARS (1958-1964)

REGULAR CAST:
Jon Provost as Timmy Martin
June Lockhart as Ruth Martin
Hugh Reilly as Paul Martin
George Cleveland as Uncle Petrie Martin
Andy Clyde as Cully Wilson

THE CAMERA: Episode 177
Originally aired May 3, 1959
Directed by Franklin Adreon
Written by Richard Sanville and J.E. Selby



A picture from Timmy's new camera proves Lassie's innocence when a neighbor claims to have been attacked.

June Lockhart's association with Lassie goes back to 1945. She has worked with more Lassies than any other actor and has personally petted all nine generations of the famed collie.

PEACE PATROL: Episode 178
Originally aired May 10, 1959
Directed by Franklin Adreon
Written by Arnold Belgard

"Peace Patrol" features a common theme for the series—a

poor family and their need for compassion and acceptance. Featuring the Lone Ranger (Clayton Moore) making a pitch for U.S. Savings Stamps.

THE REFRIGERATOR: Episode 182
Originally aired September 6, 1959
Directed by Norman Morgan
Written by Sumner Long

Paul buys Ruth a new refrigerator, but Lassie will not eat food taken from the newfangled device and a battle between Ruth and Lassie ensues.

In this episode, Lassie II's brother, Spook, who earned his name because of his skittishness, plays Lassie. Spook was never earmarked to work in television. He was one of Lassie's sons that Rudd Weatherwax kept for the family home. When Lassie II became very ill, Spook came to the rescue. He appeared in almost a full year of programs before Lassie III replaced him and a very relieved Spook got to go home and spend the remainder of his life as a pet.



SPACE INVADER: Episode 199
Originally aired January 5, 1960
Directed by Hollingsworth Morse
Written by Charles B. Smith

Timmy and a friend find the nose cone from a space probe and substitute one of the Martin's pet guinea pigs for the rocket's rodent passenger.

LASSIE PROTÉGÉ: Episode 270
Originally aired January 7, 1962
Directed by Hollingsworth Morse
Written by Z.C. Carmer

Lassie adopts a raccoon as a playmate and quickly upsets the Martin home. When the raccoon dies in an accident, it sends Lassie into mourning. A teenager learns to value life, thanks to a raccoon named Mellonhead.



An important facet of this episode centers on going to town and buying Timmy some new clothes. Throughout the Miller and Martin years, Jeff and Timmy almost always wore the same shirt, pants, and shoes. This allowed different episodes to be filmed at the same time. All the kitchen scenes for as many as half a dozen shows would be shot on the same day. Next the barn scenes would be filmed, then the location shots, etc. Not having to make wardrobe changes for each new script or scene not only saved time, but also made it easy to maintain each episode's continuity.

THE ODYSSEY: Episodes 276, 277, and 278
Originally aired February 18,
February 25, and March 4, 1962
Directed by William Beaudine
Written by Sumner Long

Probably the most popular episode in the history of Lassie, this multipart adventure is really a retelling of Eric Knight's



Lassie Come-Home. Lassie III, also known as Baby, plays the lead. Having the chance to move the adventure off the Martin farm, the producers were able to take the action to a new level.

"The Odyssey" is vividly brought to life by wonderful photography and guest appearances by many great character actors. The success of these episodes helped pave the way for Lassie being taken off the farm and placed in the service of the U.S. Forest Service two years later.

Rudd Weatherwax was good friends with many great stars of the Golden Era. He named Lassie III after the legendary blonde bombshell Jean Harlow. All of Harlow's close friends called her "Baby."

LASSIE AND THE EAGLE: Episode 281
Originally aired
March 25, 1962
Directed by
William Beaudine
Written by
Joanne Court



With Lassie's puppies due at any moment, an eagle that once adopted a goose egg from the Martin farm comes back for a visit. When the eagle gets caught in a trap, Lassie must fetch help to save the bird. When Lassie has to give birth, the bird returns Lassie's favor.

LASSIE AND THE TIGER: Episode 289
Originally aired May 27, 1962
Directed by William Beaudine
Written by Francis Rosenwald

While Timmy goes fishing, Lassie chases a tiger into the woods. Watch for Timmy's line, "This is the craziest thing that has ever happened to me." That is saying a whole lot on Lassie, because crazy things happened every week.

THE TREASURE: Episodes 331 and 332
Originally aired December 15 and December 22, 1963
Directed by Hollingsworth Morse
Written by David Richards

On a camping trip, Timmy and Cully use old World War I tricks to convince an eagle to give up her treasure. Of course, Lassie saves the day and proves love is the greatest treasure of all.

Solomon, the eagle used in this beautifully photographed two-part episode, also appeared in several other Lassie episodes including "Lassie and the Eagle."



RANGER YEARS (1964-1970)

REGULAR CAST:
Robert Bray as Corey Stuart
Jed Allan as Scott Turner
Jack De Mave as Bob Erickson

HOLOCAUST: Episodes 475 and 476
Originally aired October 13 and October 20, 1968
Directed by Dick Moder
Written by Robert Schaefer and Eric Freiwald

When a fire traps Ranger Corey and his partner, Lassie races to their rescue. With Corey in serious condition in the hospital, Lassie suddenly finds herself without a master. "Holocaust" paved the way for Lassie to be teamed with two new ranger partners played by Jed Allan and Jack De Mave.

Lassie's performances during the Ranger Years were remarkable. She had to act in fires, floods, and with a host of animals that were natural enemies. The training techniques used in the filming of these episodes were truly incredible. The United States Forestry Service supplied much of the footage.

LASSIE ALONE YEARS (1970-1973)

REGULAR CAST:
Lassie

FOR THE LOVE OF LASSIE: Episodes 542 and 543
First aired February 28 and March 7, 1971
Directed by Jack Hively, Sigmund Neufeld, Jr., and James B. Clark
Written by Robert Schaefer and Eric Friewald



A series of clips taken from various episodes showcases people who have been touched by Lassie's love and devotion.

Featuring Lassie IV, also known as Mire, one of the most photogenic Lassies.

HOLDEN RANCH YEARS (1973-1974)

REGULAR CAST:
Ron Hayes as Garth Holden
Joshua Albee as Mike Holden
Larry Pennell as Keith Holden
Larry Wilcox as Dale Mitchell
Pamelyn Ferdin as Lucy Baker
Sherry Boucher as Sue Lambert

RUN TO NOWHERE: Episodes 574 and 575
First aired November 25 and December 2, 1972
Directed by Ezra Stone
Written by Robert Schaefer and Eric Freiwald

Lassie leads a helicopter, a group of rangers, and the sheriff's department across rugged terrain to come to the aid of a boy who is lost in the wilderness.

Lassie even saves the boy from a cougar.



EPISODE LISTINGS

JEFF'S COLLIE YEARS

THE INHERITANCE

LION

LASSIE'S PUPS

THE JOURNEY

THE RUNAWAY

TRANSITION

THE TIMMY YEARS

THE CAMERA

PEACE PATROL

THE REFRIGERATOR

SPACE INVADER

LASSIE PROTÉGÉ

THE ODYSSEY

LASSIE AND THE EAGLE

LASSIE AND THE TIGER

THE TREASURE

RANGER COREY YEARS

THE HOLOCAUST

LASSIE ALONE YEARS

FOR THE LOVE OF LASSIE

HOLDEN RANCH YEARS

RUN TO NOWHERE



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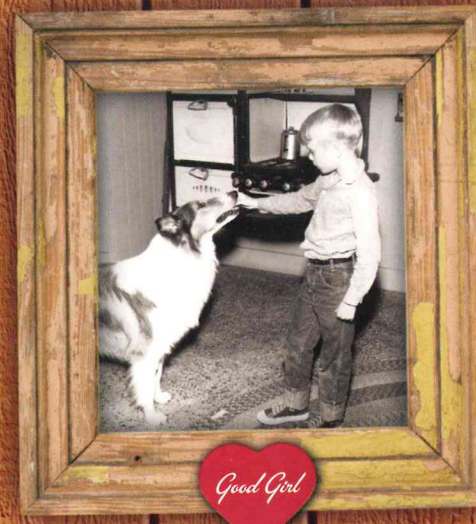


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